THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL): (a) and (b) The pricing of the commodities by and large is determined by those involved in production and trading. The Packaged Commodities Rules *inter alia*, seek to protect the consumer from arbitrary charging of prices by the retailers. Fixation of prices of profit margins for manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers is outside the scope of the Standards of Weights and Measures Act and the rules thereunder.

Raids on hoarders

2053. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister has recently declared to come down heavily on hoarders to bring down the prices of essential commodities;

(b) if so, the number of raids conducted on hoarders during the months of June, July and August, 1990 in the Capital and other parts of the country;

(c) the details of the raids conducted and whether it has any impact on the decline in the prices of essential commodities; and

(d) if not, what other measure Government propose to adopt in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) According to the information received from 21 States/UTs including Delhi, 4189 raids were conducted and goods worth about Rs. 80.6 lakhs confiscated in June, 1990 in the country. Upto date information for all States/UTs is not yet available.

Government has accorded highest priority to check the rising trend in prices of essential commodities. Both long term and short term measures are being taken for the purpose. The measures taken by the Government broadly include steps to increase the production of essential commodities, effective procurement and buffer stocking operations of foodgrains, strengthening of Public Distribution System, strict enforcement of the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act and other regulatory measures; and augmenting domestic supplies through imports (e.g. edible oils) subject to over-all constraints of foreign exchanges resources.

Release of edible oil stock by NDDB

2054. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have asked the NDDB to release their edible oils stocks in consultation with the State Governments to check the spurt in prices; and

(b) if so, what are the other directives issued by Government to the NDDB?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) and (b) Under the Integrated Policy on Edible oil/Oilseeds, National Dairy Development Board has been appointed as market intervention agency with full functional autonomy to undertake market intervention activities such as timely purchase and sale of edible oils and oilseeds to achieve the objective of the Integrated Policy. NDDB has been in touch with the State Governments whenever deemed necessary.

Increase in the availability of tea, kerosene and cement

2055. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to increase the availability of essential items like tea, kerosene and cement; and

(b) what measures are being considered in that regard?